

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NAMING THE UVALDE, TX POST OFFICE IN HONOR OF DOLPH BRISCOE

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation, which names the Uvalde Post Office in my district after an esteemed Texan, Dolph Briscoe.

Dolph Briscoe is a true Texan who graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, served in the State Legislature and was eventually elected governor of Texas.

Briscoe's roots in Texas stretch back to the days of the Alamo.

He is a direct descendant of Andrew Briscoe, an original signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Dolph Briscoe is also a dedicated American who served this country as an army officer during World War II.

Born in Uvalde to a self-made cattle rancher, Dolph Briscoe has strong roots in Texas and in the agricultural community.

He was long a champion of cattle ranchers and the agricultural community as a whole.

Serving as the youngest ever president of the Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association, Briscoe spearheaded the effort to eradicate the screw worm from cattle in the southwest, a great achievement for the livestock industry.

Once elected to the Texas State Legislature, Briscoe also led the initiative to create the farm-to-market road system.

The road system was a great improvement to the rural infrastructure of Texas, finally allowing farmers direct access to the cities and it is still in use today.

After serving in the legislature, Briscoe was elected governor of Texas.

As a pro-business Democrat, he was the only modern governor of Texas to enact a balanced budget without raising or creating new taxes.

The Briscoe family remains active in Texas, especially in Uvalde where Dolph Briscoe continues to work as a cattle rancher and also serves the community as the Senior Chairman of the First State Bank of Uvalde.

Dolph Briscoe has been committed to the city of Uvalde for decades and deserves to be honored in this way.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE FIREFIGHTERS OF CONTRA COSTA AND SOLANO COUNTIES WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today along with my colleagues Rep. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER and Rep. JERRY MCNERNEY to recognize three individuals in our districts who have given real meaning to the term "hero." Deputy Fire Marshall Ron Wiley of Richmond Fire Department, Captain Matt Burton and Fire Engineer Scott Desmond both of Contra Costa Consolidated Fire Department each lost their life in the line of duty this past month. The loss has been enormous for the families they leave behind and for their colleagues who have served our communities alongside them.

We ask a tremendous amount from our first responders every single day. They spend their time and talents educating us on how to stay safe and well and then when all the safeguards fail, we ask them to set aside their own safety for us. Ron Wiley, Matt Burton, and Scott Desmond knew well the risks they took but they each also held a deep commitment to service in our communities.

It has been said of each of these men that the love of their work as firefighters was second only to their love of family and our thoughts and prayers are with those families now. We in the communities they served so selflessly now stand to support the loved ones they have left behind.

Richmond Deputy Fire Marshall Ron Wiley, Contra Costa Consolidated Fire Captain Matt Burton and Contra Costa Consolidated Fire Engineer Scott Desmond were mentors and role models and will be forever missed. Even though we don't often express it, we as a community value our fire fighters highly and are grateful for the service and sacrifice of these brave men.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ACT

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 2107 fulfills my commitment to my constituents to continue the effort to create a Chief Financial Officer for the Territory. This is the third time that this legislation has been on the floor of the House. However, the other body failed to act on it in the previous two Congresses.

When I first introduced the idea of a CFO for the Virgin Islands in 2005, I did so in re-

sponse to the concerns, complaints and distrust of government voiced by my constituents and as a measure to prevent the territory, which was experiencing a serious financial crisis, from falling into the abyss of fiscal insolvency. I believed then, as I do now, that having such an office in our government, free of political pressures and with the statutory responsibility and authority to certify revenue projections and prevent deficit spending, could assist our government to establish sound financial practices which would put the Islands on the path to improved financial management going forward. Because of our long history of poor financial management and practices, an office such as this would also help to immediately restore the confidence of the Federal Government and others in our ability to be fiscally transparent and accountable.

As I have said on this floor and in many other settings, in drafting H.R. 2017, I looked at the example and record of what having such a position has meant to the financial management and fiscal health of the District of Columbia.

After having decades of fiscal mismanagement and protracted deficits, the District today enjoys annual balanced budgets and surpluses under the stewardship of a Chief Financial Officer; an office that was voluntarily retained by the city after the mandated office went away with the end of their Financial Control Board. Both the general public and elected leadership of the District recognize the benefits of having an impartial arbiter, free from the pressures of politics, managing their finances—something I strongly believe my community can benefit from as well.

When I first introduced this bill the territory's long-term debt totaled \$1 billion. Fiscal crises have been narrowly averted through repeated borrowing. Such borrowing and debt creation has led to the \$3 billion debt reported by Governor De Jongh in April of this year—a practice he has already stated he will not continue.

There are those, Madam Speaker, who will ask why I am doing this at this time, particularly because the islands just seven months ago, inaugurated a new governor whose background is in financial management and who has been a good friend and political ally. I want to be perfectly clear that I have every confidence in Governor John de Jongh and his administration and believe that they will do a first rate job of managing the territory's finances. He has already begun to do so.

I am re-introducing this bill because my constituents continue to see it as a necessary measure, and because, like the CFO in Washington, DC, it can assist our governor in his stated goal of paying our obligations and bringing the territory's finances into balance. It would also be a way to provide apolitical and indisputable information on the financial state of our government, as well as bridge any divisions between the administration and the legislature in the interests of expediting a positive and sustainable agenda for the people of the Virgin Islands.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

As also happens up here, there is often disagreement between the governor (and his financial team) and the legislature as to the precise fiscal condition of the territory and the true revenue projections for the coming fiscal year. A CFO, in my view, would take the uncertainty out of this equation and allow our legislature and governor to work better together because they would both get their numbers from the same independent source. Additionally, the departments of government, semi-autonomous agencies and labor unions would be better able to plan, and the people of the Virgin Islands in general would have information on how the millions of Federal dollars coming to the Virgin Islands are being spent.

The bill as being passed today contains certain changes. I have revised it with respect to providing a financial management system because such a system is already in the process of being implemented. In recognition of and in deference to the upcoming constitution to be drafted by the people of the Virgin Islands, the bill before us calls for the term of the Chief Financial Officer to expire at the implementation of a ratified Virgin Islands Constitution or in five years, whichever comes first.

All four previous Constitutional documents have contained a provision similar to what is proposed in this legislation, and it is my hope that our Fifth Constitutional Convention will present a document for the ratification of the people of the Virgin Islands that will make this legislation unnecessary. In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, the Chairman of the Resources Committee, the gentleman from West Virginia, NICK RAHALL, without whose support this bill would not be on the floor today. I also want to thank my friend Ranking Member DON YOUNG for his support as well.

Madam Speaker, it has been said that “heavy is the burden that one who is called to lead bears”. Pursuing enactment of this bill has not been an easy burden to bear but an important one; which I am proud to bear. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 2107.

**CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1,
IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDA-
TIONS OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION
ACT OF 2007**

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2007

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1, Improving America's Security Act of 2007, which includes critical security provisions endorsed by the 9/11 Commission as well as an overdue expansion of the visa waiver program, VWP.

Mr. Speaker, the visa waiver program is an immensely valuable program for the United States, and the legislation before us will not only enable us to expand the visa waiver program to additional allies who already offer U.S. citizens visa-free travel to their countries, but simultaneously strengthen the security aspects of the program.

Although H.R. 1 expands the VWP, I would have preferred that the program expand to all the roadmap countries, among them some of

America's most important and loyal allies, and I am hopeful Congress will take steps to address this issue in the near future.

Despite my concerns that some roadmap countries may be excluded, this legislation is an important step towards addressing the security concerns that members of Congress have articulated about the visa waiver program. I am confident that once the security measures outlined in H.R. 1 are implemented, those members of Congress who previously had concerns about the program will be open to considering further expansion of the visa waiver program.

In the meantime, it is imperative that the Bush Administration and Congress continue to work with our allies, who deserve to participate in the program. The United States should also provide assistance to help these governments reduce their visa refusal rates and meet all the necessary requirements detailed in the Improving America's Security Act.

It is clear that H.R. 1 fulfills key 9/11 Commission recommendations and improves the security aspects of the visa waiver program, and I applaud my colleagues for their efforts to make our country safer and further expand this program. However, America cannot successfully fight the battle against international terrorism without the cooperation and trust of our allies. I would like to remind my colleagues that the 9/11 Commission also stressed the need for diplomacy and cooperation with other Nations to address the threat of international terrorism. In this vein, further expansion of the visa waiver program can play a vital role in strengthening America's relationships and security partnerships with our most trusted allies—which is essential to preventing another 9/11 disaster.

**FARM, NUTRITION, AND
BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007**

SPEECH OF

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Chairman, I would like to express my support for the amendment to the Farm Bill Extension Act of 2007, H.R. 2419, offered by my friend Mr. FRANK from Massachusetts. The amendment aims to remove the expansions in the underlying legislation that would expand the Farm Credit System. The Farm Credit System is a \$163 billion direct lending Government sponsored enterprise that has its own regulatory system and preferential borrowing authority.

The proposed expansions of the Farm Credit System in the original measure would have diluted farmer ownership of farm cooperatives and would have undermined farm cooperative principles. Fortunately, the Frank amendment passed last night by a voice vote, as these extensions of the Farm Credit System clearly did not have the support of the majority of my House colleagues. Because the amendment was approved, the Farm Credit System is bet-

ter able to serve its intended constituency by providing credit directly to family farmers, ranchers, and farmer-owned cooperatives.

The protections afforded by the Frank amendment to the farming sector are also reflected in protecting our financial institutions by preventing an unwarranted expansion into mainstream banking activities. Our Nation's financial institutions have continued to evolve and meet the needs of consumers over the years. These innovations should continue to be fostered while maintaining the security and independence of our financial institutions.

I applaud the passage of the Farm Bill, which will provide our Nation's farmers with meaningful and necessary assistance for the next 5 years. I look forward to continuing to work with my House colleagues to enact effective reform in the financial sector as well.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 748. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye” on rollcall No. 748.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, as reflected in the RECORD, on July 25 and 26, I was on a scheduled leave of absence for a family funeral. If I had been present, I would have voted in the following way:

On rollcall No. 727, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 728, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 729, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 730, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 731, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 732, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 733, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 734, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 735, I would have voted “no.”

On rollcall No. 736, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 737, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 738, I would have voted “aye”; on rollcall No. 739, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 740, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 741, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 742, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 743, I would have voted “no”; on rollcall No. 744, I would have voted “aye.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit a record of how I would have voted on Thursday, July 26, during which I